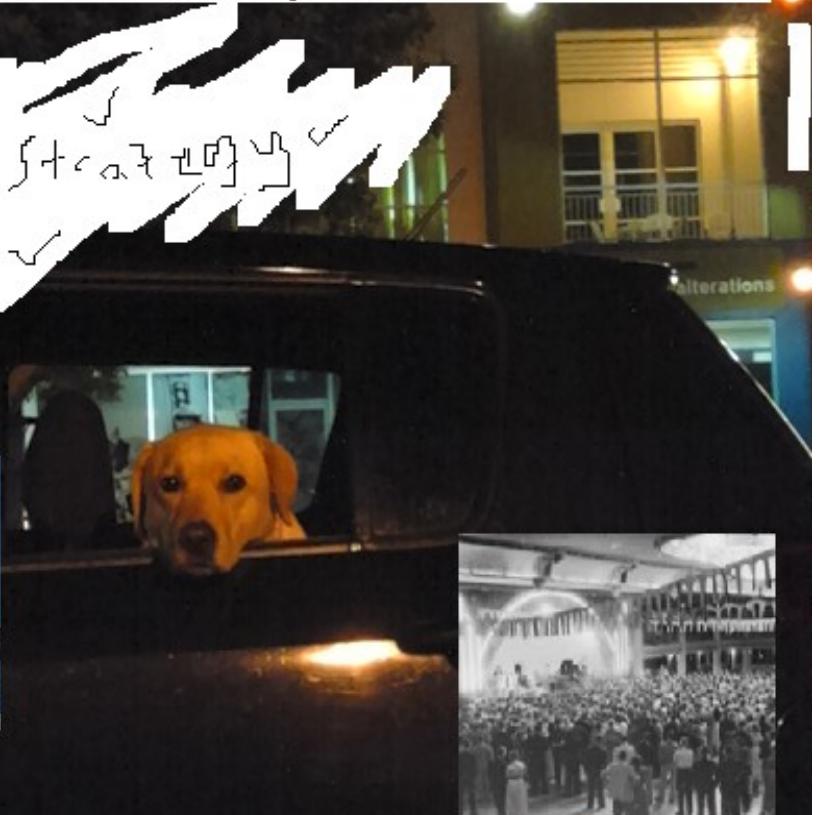


FLASH WIRES

11

UNBELIEVABLE: Could Darthft Maulron and the Passive Agresives actually exist?



Did you say *the Drum* or *the Dum*? + more incisive independent cultural commentary

NOT A SOAP OPERA: Leave your Dirty Matress and Look Forward To SYDNEY

Unparalleled jubilants

The Passive Aggressives - Minimum Requirements (2017)

Eternal Solecheck
Tenner Court
R.I.P Economy
Berdom Sock Records
Malk Records
Subby Pop

The Passive Aggressive's new album *Minimum Requirements* is an A grade class exemplar of the satirical slacker rock genre. These brats (or this brat? How many people really worked on it, did one person do all the work?) don't even seem to try. Don't we all wish we could do that, just write a conceptual piece portraying angst so entertaining, so stylishly understated that is possibly unreal and unearned? This is a world where grades don't matter and you can do what you want. The Passive Aggressives want you to know that. Except, they know what you do does matter in the normal world, hence the confessional that dicking around in a band being merely *Passive Aggressive*, against oppressive social constraints, and merely *saying something to a few people* about it is in effect not enough, *though* it is the Minimum Requirement to *seem* enough to *some other* people. Like an audience that actually likes them. The only problem is that this band does not exactly exist, and decided to present the theoretical component before actually doing anything, making excuses like, my neck hurts, my fine motor skills are not at their best today, I haven't had enough beers for that, I might later and

have a think about it. So there is really just fuck all except a half raised middle finger half at yourself, a thumbs up with the tip in your mouth, and an aging jacket you planted on a wet wall. And this article, which escapes all criteria and was not part of the assignment. Do I even really care about their stupid rock assignment? What are they on about anyway? They trying to insult me? Wait until they find out what kind of operation I think they have there. Maybe they'll invite me to join? Yes, yes! We could have costumes made of gossip rags, post-it-notes, internet screenshots, non-compliance notices, a drummer in military getup who loses morale for the band. We would always play late, too. And drink water to spite the punters. But what the fuck is passive aggressive, shouldn't it be *passive defensive* if you're expressing aggression or apathy about something unjust? I dunno. Let's see if making the Minimum Requirements can prove you're not *passively compliant*.

They/we will 'release' their EP at a limited number of R.I.Y. (record it yourself) shows where the audience and prospective labels must bring their own recording devices. No liabilities for accidental equipment damages apply. No royalties, no copyrights.

X Y Z of ABC Equation = B.S.

ABC discusses aboriginal people with four white people and one nervous-looking aboriginal person. That's low, but kudos for then letting the

Sydney City Councillor, admitted child of immigrants, showcase her groutesque, sheltered entitlement to precious, precious taxpayer's money by sharply assuring her scruples about letting spare change go to other kinds of migrants and refugees who are presumed not to suffer enough for her standards. Just kidding, her and the show's host should be admonished to some minor role, dragged on screen begrudgingly to account for their heads having been stuck up their arses. This is the essence of what you said, darling, "there are lots of discourses and anger around these people, my Mummy and Daddy worked hard for *me*, it is so unfair." You and the show host, answer for, "OUR taxpayer's MONEY is very IMPORTANT just to REITERATE that WE can't give it out willy nilly to MINORITY groups who we cannot TRUST with OUR POSSESSIONS."

What about the money? Host, account for your asinine response to the quantum physicist, "Do you know, Mr. token sane and kind intellectual, about the price tag? Think about the money. These foreigners we're talking about are 0.03 percent of people, but the money is also percent – a BIGGER percent - of *our money*. Money, money! Money's cool! \$160m and some of these people committed awful crimes, which is worse than Australians committing crimes because they need more *money*, EEEEHHEHEH big toothy grin, you know me and my mates get about 1/4th that amount in our combined salaries for talking a load of bullshit? Can't believe

the public buys into this shit, cheers yankee friend for being part of our civilised discourse

AAAHAHAHAHHA I AM ERIC CARTMAN GOOD ONE. SYDNEY

Thanks teacher lady, it's so

interesting when someone thinks we care about your very passionate *philosophical treatise on neoliberal hypocrisy*. You know the principles that matter here, yes? Yes, let's move on. By the way, I like when you talk about MONEY, token Aboriginal woman, we made the right choice. Toe the line and you'll get to stay in the hard news."

Fuck this, I'm not 'joining the conversation', fuck their methods. I've barely begun to scrape the shit off the surface. Let Liberal cuts strangle it, don't care. Start again! Restructure your programs and every discussion panel, replace most of the kids channel with some basic fucking logic and rhetoric and stories told by old people, maybe get some 'balance' in your adult news with ethically rigorous, ruthlessly prioritised, kindly proportioned programs.

"Hey what do you guys think of circuses?" Blonde Sydney councillor turns into PETA representative, the last word is "OMG it's so wrong, like some of them get treated so wrong". Aboriginal lady makes a joke about conceding to her son's interest in them. "Well, I guess if it was up to me, we wouldn't have them, but we know what kids are like nowadays" You're too nice, lady.

"Ha Ha ha that's all we have time for" with a big toothy grin, cha-ching, wins the jackpot

another night. "We are the stewards of this land! We own this town, bitches!"

IF you're wondering why there are three columns, it's because a bunch of people from little old Brisbane are going to play the OPERA HOUSE, the apex of artistic accomplishment, that's in SYDNEY because they didn't demolish their symbolic modern landmarks (CLOUDLAND BALLROOM would've been way better than your highbrow bowl stack). The three columns vaguely resemble Adidas, which is what Sydney reminds me of, and some ticks are thrown in for balance. Anyway, this is not a competition for prestige. None of it is, we're just cracking into the surface of the adult civilised world for once. Fuck it, I'm allowed shoes, I'm allowed to go to the Opera House. I dunno who permitted these miscreants a once-n-a-lifetime set there but I'm thanking no-one but Nic Warnock, record store guy who is already commendable for doing better than to just flog \$60 reissues of Pink Floyd and piously rebel against the notion of your job being decent customer service (edit: must apologise for not also including Chris Sammut, the founder of Repressed Records, whom I missed out of ignorance and Nic having been the one first introducing me to local music here from when I first wandered in) And whom I have probably freaked out at times by poorly regulating my excitement about a store with good new stuff, ending up on some dorky tangent. You're all a tiny bit dorky, though, underneath the

piercing discernment/taste. If anyone else is responsible for working to organise this – any of you who didn't automatically assume the authority and wealth to access prime public space for your preferred art – step up for your accolades. And, thanks to Paradise Daily, The Friendsters, Destiny 3000, & any others in the mediastream shaping my perception that Sydney's some feminist utopia. Might be a rose-coloured perception but it's nice to for once, feel like a boy seeing swathes of men doing music and organising. Just got to peek in your romantic feminine camaraderie future land, in your gorgeous 19th century homes. Greetings from my depression-era termite box.

Importantly Matt Kennedy gets to play, and everybody else who gets to say "Look Dad I did something." Lowly punks or not it's about time some recognition and faith in these veterans came certified. Bring families closer. Fun, faith and family 8-D but outside the Hillsong Sharia influence (thanks Betoota Advocate, also I reckon you're from Brisbane too). Did you know 'punk rock' met the British masses on public funds? The prestigious BBC? Here we have an Australian icon, not quite prime-time TV but let's show you off a bit. Xx

THE END MAN Darthft Maulron – Fetid Hat (2007)

This band sprung up some time between 2006 and now, it's hard to be sure because none of the loosely compiled digital files are dated. It's rumoured that a

screenshot exists on a dead external hard drive, taken of 4chan in 2007, lauded for it's prescient weirdness in a now-defunct Situationist

International forum. Their existence would be 404'd, perma-banned, accidentally a whole banned if not for a mysterious file lodged inside a torrent entitled 'folk metal compilation'.

Open up, *i am end man.mp4* and witness the putrid, but peculiarly, manically, compassionate take on an intersection between alienated powerlust geekdom and Icky Boyfriends counter-cultural inheritance. Grainy phone footage shows mainly, a backdrop of putrid, banal poverty centring in on a total fucking solipsist lunatic. It's not a basement this in in, either. It's a *mattress castle* under a stilted Queenslander with those wood slats you can see between. Camera showing slats zooms in, you see something hanging and heart jumps a bit but it's not a dead cat it's barney the dinosaur, in front of an actual bedroom - mattressroom - entrance. Walls are sometimes two filthy mattresses thick, lined with tarps. Two crudely cut windows with cushions stuffed in them. Mirthless computer laugh. "Now", an adolescent female voice says, and a wall opens up slowly. Out steps presumably the Daft Moron/Genius, in a child size Darth Vader mask, a battered *Blondie* tshirt, German army jacket and a trampled on, misshapen trilby. Most fucked up, trackies bound like bondage pants, and the fly of his stretched jocks is showing.

Everything is covered in dry dirt – the camera lens, *everything*, is like it was dug up from the yard and given a brush off.

He marches outside slowly, stiffly, pauses, turns for the camera to follow. It pans up to an LED light and a hanging no-brand doll. Down to desk. Again, this is hard to date; beige late 90s computer screens, grainy footage of parts. Can make out a Civilisation mousepad on the battered 90s chipboard. Miniature plastic figurines on the floor. Old ANZAC biscuit tin, a footy, *In Flames* CD, a coin from the NAZI era, afforded similar respect. Pans over to Darfht Maulron walking up stateman-like, up some pallets, to his staged throne of doom: a computer chair. Silent movie cut screen says, "I am strategy master, all bow down to me" Cut to alternate angle of Barney, Ronald McDonald, a bunch of stuffed toys stapled by the ears and hair to the mattress wall. Then the toy replica weapons above him. Maps, scrawlings, Bart Simpson sling shot. Close up of face being fed by two sets of hands. Cuts back, to him slowly clawing out to the camera, which pans around as it's doe-eyed camerawoman/victim of the force reveals herself flopping on a mattress. She looks really sick. Maulron now sombrely mimics the Evil Dead claw clawing out at her. He looks a bit like Ian Curtis for a few seconds restraining it. It intensifies into wild punk frontman antics, then flops down next to her in shellshock. She touches his neck gently, lifts Courtney Love ripped doll's dress up to thick,

bloody inner thighs. Him: mask-muffled baby crying. Old silent film text, "This is my blood, this is my body. Partake of it and think of me" Out comes a brimming, dripping menstrual cup of dark blood. Other hand pulls blister packs out of flaking metallic fake leather bag; Prozac, and perhaps a contraceptive? Darthf Maulron shaking, takes the cup as she lifts off the mask. Striped with dirt and tears. He pops out a Prozac and the other pill from the blister packs, chases it with the blood, clots and all like slithery oysters. Some drips down. Face now striped with tears, blood and dirt. Holy Communion complete. He drags her out onto the grass. Cat and a dog sniff camera. Goes back inside, BANG. Pop. Psssstttt... Sparkler bombs and fireworks inside. Up in flames.

You don't know if it's real or fake the whole time. Fire's real, but the people? The sickness? It looks real but what the fuck. Metalcore was pretty big in the day but I dunno if a practised life-or-death shriek can sound like this. "The Führer. Is. Dead! KILL IUGHHTT AURGHHHHH." House cracks up slowly. Disembodied kind of voice behind camera says, "that's all for today folks".

ALTERNATE ENDING plays, possibly pre-filmed:

Backyard sprinkler turns on, gently spraying passed out girl and dandelions. Boy comes running out gripping singed Barney toy, strips, vomits, wipes face, yanks everything off but underwear, stumbles over and holds girl. Finds her pulse. Her

eyes flutter open slightly and they kiss with sirens wailing. Bloody tears drip down.

Then cuts to the house slowly burning, sizzling, exploding in fragments. Can't pick the song that starts playing, they found something other than 1812 Overture that had a similar effect.

The thing I said I might type up

Hand wrote most of this the other day, right before bed.

Edit: Had wrote probably, a quarter of this that night. It's ended up quite long.

Maybe photos are a perverse invention & indigenous symbols and cartoon-like drawings were done because realistic ones were creepy and tied you to the ephemeral past too much (too anxiously). Transmit ideas & culture & direct tellings, not *emotionally-ambiguous but unnecessarily detailed* representations of dead people or the individual. If I remember my history tutor correctly, a practice after a death was to complete a designated collective mourning period and then not speak about that individual again, though the past was (or is) permitted to live on the timelessness of culture.

Our problem with modern media – no, everything in our social & material landscape - is that these things (ideas & cultural connection) are manipulated so fast that we want memory aids, hard historical evidence, to remain connection to all the conflicting parts of our

lives, for cultural arguments, for milestones, for future art hoped to be somehow as stabilising as ancient cultures. Our implicit civic responsibility is to personally interpret and present what we find – with no solid base. Experimental. To seek stability in reproducing Western culture or corporate generic formulations of identity expression is artistically, politically complacent. It also keeps everything unstable; this system of buying and selling, constant uprooting, pillaging, toxic blame games. Then you've got your experiments in art & lifestyle that nudge the identity crisis forward more quickly. These are the ultimate cruel pillagers, usurpers resented by the simple and desperate cultural conservatives, or they are the ones picking up the pieces neglected by everybody else. They want to bring everyone, and everyone's lives into lasting cultural wholesomeness. How? I dunno. The difference is very important, though. Because, we need to fucking think clearer and communicate simply, unlike this hodgepodge looking reflection of my identity disintegration and sociology's infancy as a discipline. There is vagueness and possible part non-sequiturs throughout, but give it the same treatment as I give to all the terribly written philosophy and sociology books I have read. Only – read it with less reverence and don't feel like you're stupid. You're not stupid. God, why am I reproducing such oblique, vague, personally embarrassing, niche-targeted tripe? Should I debate the merits of stream of consciousness and dis-inhibition? Sorry, I'm blurting out a bunch of stuff in a

disorderly manner and hoping that somebody else will make it orderly for me. It was all I could write in that moment. Yes, this part here is an edit. This is all over the place in time. That, conveniently helps to illustrate what I'm actually on about. See, Radio National interviewed a teacher sent to an Aboriginal Community where the way of teaching was to bring things up only in the appropriate location and time where the purpose of the knowledge was self-evident for the people whose business it was to know. That is the conceptual, cultural counter-point I've had in mind writing this wandering, possibly mental-disorder-associated eccentric speculations, and also the article in the next edition, that I have already written and printed out (issue 12).

Anyhow, I am not stupid or distinctly mentally unwell. The problem is that I began writing an article without understanding what exactly it wanted or needed to say. I am saying many, many things at once, and how they are connected might not be evident to you, as somebody mentally and physically situated somewhere else. If you understand – excellent. Thank you for your time. Please help me to translate this into something wholesome and ethical and not just an anxiety-inducing abomination that's useless to anybody who wants security. As I recurrently do, I am writing about just about everything and just about nothing out of an idealistic, comprehensive disdain for the order I find myself in but will at some point need to understand. No, no – it isn't a disdain, more

a detachment in this instance where I have no specific object except to find... some... thing... that is... find something for everyone, the uh world peace and social and psychological harmony. I've got harmony more or less, but not spiritual harmony. I'm insecure, just like every other bickering, judgy-faced, target-marketed, image-obsessed, share house renting, wardrobe crisis, debate-engaging modern/post-modern/w/e worker-consumer. I've got all the stuff to prove it. I've still got all the stuff.

Primary and secondary sources. What's more are my memories and senses. Compiled together, they do not function. Whether out of stubbornness or incapacity, I do not sufficiently cull and rearrange aspects of my past in order to function. It is passe to be too functional anyhow; it is artificial and predictable to be stock standard stable. Yet, you need to fit a standard of functionality to be an *artist* or *anything*. The reason I am not something, why I don't produce something coherent, could be speculated to be due to psychiatric disorder or simple laziness or essential, autistic social aloofness but the truth is that I've got connections all over the place. Gonna make that sound more like something noble and politically grandiose than the reality of simple awkwardness and incoherence like a kid stuck in the middle of a divorce. I've got connections. And they don't agree with each other. I hesitate to cull evidence of my past. Every good Westerner doesn't like censorship and has some understanding of loyalty. Yet, there's always a reason to tear

up the past. Every good Westerner loves privacy, too, so they can be who they want. Or, whatever is demanded of them to function. My gross, vague reductionism is a stripped down and thus more universally applicable sum of my influences. It is some of the closest functional honesty I can muster. As in, it functions in an intellectual framework as neutrally explanatory as possible. Perhaps it could become some kind of thesis and get sucked into an established social, economic function. A badge, a certificate to say what these very disparate groups of people can agree on; that I am Officially Employed and Productive. As for the work itself though, ah, it won't bring me the satisfaction of wholeness of belonging. Cull, cull. Pick your favourite parent, grandparent, brother or sister, little Jimmy, or you'll never grow up. Just do something, alright; we need to get on with things. You've got dozens of parents to choose from, Jimmy. More than we ever had. Jimmy might shed his earthly and interpersonal attachments and be a very modern man with a modern apartment and casual everything. He might ride off on his bike and write some sad songs. He might have a single photo of his family amongst some lazily compiled décor secondary to the computer station or work tools. He might become fatally ambivalent about everything in the world, languishing into psychological illness or saving his intellect with the application of near-blanketing amused cynicism or near-compulsive, selfless, bland niceness (again, striving for

connection through unworldly reductionism). Poor Jimmy. Now, Jimmy the everyday Artist, or Jimmy the healthily decisive, emotionally functional, but assertive person who desires to be scrupulously honest and fair about the experiences he takes from people and places – not forgetting any grandma, any grade 5 best friend, first love, teacher, book character, pet, friend's parent, favourite meeting place, parent's stories, sincere moral lessons, moments exposing cultural degeneracy, and so on – has a challenge. He is struggling for dignity and choice. He wants belonging, wisdom, character and attachment. The other Jimmy's had no choice, seemingly, but to adjust to their alienation. Jimmy's in pieces. Part of Jimmy's soul dies. Those 20th century wusses with their home towns, home ownership, unionised blue collar work, alienating fake-smile suit-wearers fretting about heavy metal and the family unit didn't know what'd hit them over the next century. Those people had character, those stable 2D figures. Give us some compensation for our worlds falling apart, will you? Or to save us? Every big family needs something to connect with. Something to be proud of, to do, that makes sense and isn't for nothing, even if everybody isn't alike. You shit step-parent denying your kids dinner unless they polish the jutting-out exterior of your plastic-coated furniture and other such alien, not-apparently-functional adornments. The kids get some lollies and a supervised outing to a specially designed kid theme restaurant, with a

nondescript bear mascot who "...the kids better fucking enjoy because it's all they get. You're fucking supposed to, you're the kid. The teenagers do the teenager things, and the adults do the adult things. Some day when you grow up and have adult's money, you can do what you want, ok? Don't complain you fucking brat. Look, Grandma likes the bear. Go hug the bear, we need a picture for Aunty Cheryl. The bear is sad."

"But Mum, Dad, I'm not being a brat, I just want a family and a place that isn't mean and weird and I don't know how to express that. You don't have to shower me with love or bullshit, just not be fucking lame. Grandma didn't even want to come here, by the way, it's just that you didn't want to pay for a decent ethnic restaurant because you're intimidated by groups of people who are apparently not socially retarded and function as communities. Thanks Mum and Dad for preparing me for a world with no privacy, no financial security, pointless work for cheap sensual gratification, and no heritage for your children." Soon, the poor parents are inundated with, "WE WANT DESSERT WE WANT DESSERT AHA WE'RE ON STRIKE. HAHA."

"Who's under that bear mask anyway? We feel bad for them." They chase him to the Kidz Korner. TAKE OFF THE MASK, GENERIC BEAR MASCOT. "TAKE OFF THE MASK TAKE OF THE MASK TAKE OFF THE MASK". 'He' takes the mask off and it's a frontwoman of a local pop-punk-metal crossover band.

"Hey, it's work for the dole kids. Don't be like me. Got just enough for smokes, chocolate bars, xannies, dexies... (edit: nah forget the last two) Shit but I get by." "Well, this is my 'job' but we've got a show at the park on Saturday. Do you like the playground? Well, they wanna get rid of it, and the trees, and kick my auntie out of her house. We used to spend every Christmas there, all the kids and their cousins would play tag on Christmas eve. Gonna do it one last time for protest. Aw you've got chores? Reason I'm doing this is because I worked my arse off in grade 10. Reason I have fucking blue hair like a cartoon character and had a mental breakdown is cause I was stuck indoors, didn't have a culture, couldn't play like you guys could. Why do I have a funny tattoo? Oh, you noticed that... I took myself way too seriously. I'd be scared of me too, if I met myself at your age. Thanks for chatting, though, sorry your parents are dickheads. Is your grandma cool though? Hang out with her more. Yeah and that all you can eat dessert is rank, by the way."

"EXCUSE ME. Kids. I'm sorry." "Hey it's ok, my name's Dana. They just wanted to see the real me." "Sorry. Bear with me. They can be a bit *creative*. *Ok, let the poor lady do her job.*". The parents think. They all say goodbye to Dana. They fill out the feedback cards and complain to facebook that they didn't take their kids to Family Restaurant for their children to fraternise with weirdo's. However, Dana should be allowed the dignity of her face being uncovered on the

condition that the advertised family restaurant ethos is abided by. Their children get to fill out cards too. And when they get home, there is a compulsory family meeting and chores to do. "What're you going to do in the real world if you can't handle weekend work with flexible hours, hmmm? Don't be like that lady."

Auntie Deb gets a nice picture, Grandma cheekily snaps one of them with Dana. The kids do reserve some skepticism about Dana's aesthetic and lifestyle. They're not gonna mimick her, the smart kids. It is kind of tacky and empty like their parents but this conflict is stimulating their little minds. It's no two-sided dilemma here, like an old 20th century cliché, rebels vs. squares. They've got their own peculiar absurdity to work through. They keep those pictures. Maybe the subjugation of work is going to wear them down, make them feel silly for taking interest in such 'superficial' concerns like being blackmailed into excessively pretending, having to be essentially disconnected, and seeing human indignity in being used. They might not have much of a chance to grow out of being mere brats; bratty kids use others for their own ends (conflating *self-gratifying impulsiveness* with *improving society* is why so much of punk is cringe-worthy).

Salient order vs. Salient mess

Alright, it's been a few days since writing that last little story and now I'll think of stuff to connect it to the rest of what I wrote a few weeks ago. I also

edited some of it. I guess that's a form of censorship. Just wrote something and erased it and it makes me a bit anxious. I have a suspicion I'm getting off track. THINK, this doesn't have to be an indulgent tangential cop-out to make all of this fit into something USEFUL. Now that sounds a bit better. Now Jimmy and the bear mask thing and this parenting-as-microcosm-for-economic-and-social-injustice thing might've taken this from something less obvious to something associated with some old story, some trope that's been BASHED TO THE GROUND already. You know what I mean, *suburban repression corporate fucking bullshit*. But, this is about the internet and my simplifying metaphors fail to illustrate how all over the place, how difficult to fit into a story – aha, it fails to illustrate how confused this impossibly diverse and ambiguous this whole media landscape, 21st century (dis)organisation, and social confusion has made me. Perhaps I am only confused in that I fail to engage with what is right fucking there in concrete stories. There are some kids with mean/cold/inconsistent parents who make them work for junk instead of real good sense and belonging, grandma has trouble passing on a legacy, the kids act out, work for the dole Dana invites them to real life outside of work and exploitation (shush if you think Dana just wants them to come to her event for some selfish reason, shhhh, STOP thinking about altruism versus. Selfishness and the extent that the mentality of users, social climbers and money-seekers leaks into social solicitation, earnest

wholesomeness veritably objectively EXISTS and I say it does in my story. Maybe she is tinged with sadness or slight vanity that gets in the way of a sense of intimacy, but that's not the same thing. She helps the kids and will do them no harm. Because I write the story. The whole thing is obviously not realistic or a thorough representation of 21st century life. Shh...) Aunty Deb gets the illusion of picture-perfect as per expectation for some reason you can probably imagine, the parents allow freedom of expression in a pointless, private restaurant feedback form and in affirmation of talents according to how productive and profitable they might be, as opposed to the social consequences. This is all pretty obvious stuff. I think that is OK, perhaps, but it also makes me slightly uncomfortable (the obviousness and the references to old tropes and cliches). Who talks about stuff like alienation now when there are grown up issues and threats? I am driven to change. My instinct is (my misguided, mal-apropiated instinct, perhaps) that this kind of talk did not work in fixing the world OR that it is simply embarrassing and a poor demonstration of my own possible ~originality~ and ~avant-garde intellectual~ capabilities. You know what, though? You know why this makes me slightly anxious? It's because I don't know, I don't have control here, hence, I must be doing something new. My unease must drive revision and recreation. Maybe there is something glaringly wrong here that a weaker signal in my brain is recognising. There is

something incomplete. Can I revisit this later?

How complex and immobilising a life situation seems is a matter of salience, which is a psychology or neuroscience or psychiatry term that could mean 'notice-ability and powerful distinction of environmental or sself/brain-generated stimuli. Or I could just say, you see options and have thoughts based on what things you've learned to notice and do stuff with. What's the plot? What can you do with lots of plots and lost plots? Gonna make a mess sometimes, gonna over-simplify sometimes. Gonna be over-complex and over-stretched like serving up a plate containing everything in a 100 dish potluck before even knowing all the guests are OK, or even talking to anybody, like a pig (but you can make some fun out of that too, it'd be better than the single-dish, only talk to your partner style). Yeah, I dunno. This is all a bit overstretched but there's EVEN MORE tht I can't even overstretch to. I am insular, stable to onlookers but my mind has been focused on a bunch of diluted stuff. I am trying to be grounded, again and again, but with increasing dignity of having known enough to justify the salience of what *I*, pulling away from [insert demographics/identities embarrassing to mention here] status, focus on. Trying to get out of myself, my group, trying to get into myself, in a group...

Hope you can pick up something in here in this under-edited semi-free-form.

~

We can pick up photos, journals, recordings etc. as desired, and stash them away to move about and forget for a while too, unlike the memories embedded in ancient places and ancient art. We censor, burn, chop up & replace, display, emphasise holidays, guiltily wonder what to do with the ones of exes, more embarrassing times... Some people keep the lot on public profiles, showing a kind of bricoleur detachment to all the faces, places & ages long gone perhaps out of an honesty, a tacky carelessness, a lightheartedness, or a sense of obligation to display it all despite the fragmentation. Others present only what will seem timeless, perhaps discreet and respectable, business-like, or idealistically curated. They appeal to the imaginations of the anticipated viewers, seeming warm and predictable through their histories. Wall art, pseudo-'primitive', pseudo-connected to unpretentious, healthy day to day lives & places we dream about. We, the distant viewer, or the like-minded graspers, myth-making together. Censor all you like, but there is always/usually an objective reminder of your own fragmentary, brittle side (for good or bad? Don't know). Perhaps hidden in some cave, an archive burying trash and treasure. You can't, or don't speak about many of these things, and consciously live out what they show and mean anymore, without prompting, or without that, memory coming to surface from some barely traceable stimuli... They are so warm and wholesome sometimes, reassuring us of

progress or reminding us of better possibilities, but also sometimes voyeuristic, identity-threatening and isolating. What if you've got nothing but your photos? Or everything plus your photos, haunting you in places where memories that specific are no longer needed (presumably). Who do I want to show, what do I want to tell, why? Who are you anyway, the public, I guess, who I am most often disconnected to, but very preoccupied with at the same time. You see my clothes, my profile, my face, and all my ambitions are closely tied to you. Can't share much specific, with "Public" (buildings, parks, public holidays etc. by people who don't articulate my role or their values, except with photos of models and stereotypes, or of people so ancient and nondescript they may as well be symbols). So, I too, must model, as an at least somewhat distant individual, fragmented, symbolic, even cosying up to the fragmentation of it all to reconcile the parts. Build a more consistent social realm, a heaven, not only a few friends in **this** pretty nondescript built environment, but with all others similar, in synchronised custodianship of "capital", of "immediate family", of bands, the worth of which is affirmed by the harmonies of yet more of this visually cohesive, socially enriching, imaginary heaven landscapes. This contrasts with the actual world of life & work, office worker glancing at child's photo, artist self-consciously carrying their visual world in their clothes, in their record collection, closed or poised for reopening when the 'real world' permits. So, photos, film,

recordings seem to be necessary. But they are still perverse, frightening, destabilising. That is, if they are not too 'real'; if they do jar with the 'now' fantasies in being an ugly mess, guilt-tripping you when you want a clean slate, you censor, your hoarder, you home-spun archivist, or if they are not real enough (dorky fantasy); if either way, they present a *void* of continuous, collective history. If they don't, well, perhaps you are a censor, a dreamer. Maybe you're happy, but the smaller you chop everything down, the more you're an exclusive little club, and the more tragic it'll be if things change. I've got loads and loads of semi-banal shit photos lying around. I guess it means I'm not much but at least roads, trees, malls will always be there. Even selfies, makeup. Not exactly a healthy existence, it's like I'm attaching to places and objects and fantasies while a lot of people churn through products, ikea furniture, social photos and such, maybe clinging to one or two sentimental items, being new and functional as possible. Or, just about pure functionality. I puzzled over why I sometimes found this sometimes grottesque, and why I suppressed that discomfort because I didn't want to be a snob. Where it probably comes from is an implicit snobbiness on their part; perhaps *they* don't judge *you* first because *you* barely exist on a certain level? I mean, on that indescribably profound but somehow superficial level. They are secure, they live in the *present* because their shared public history permits them; they have sport and TV and politics and scrapbooking kits. They have a

massive, aesthetically & discursively articulated common group, while you the art fag self-consciously, painstakingly bare the cracks and messes of common existence. Maybe you've even made something beautiful of yourself. But they, in their solid formulations, team jerseys, corporate uniforms, might even hate who they are and adore you and know vulnerability when they see it, deep down. But the cracks in their aesthetic are overshadowed by big, bold colours, like military flags, bare muscle, witchcraft, religion, functional items. Apart from the artistically-inclined and the normal, well-adjusted, there is the weakest who can't begin to organise themselves in dreamland or physical, animal reality. All eggs broken in many broken, discarded baskets but with a few govt. eggs (tragic dregs, homeless, ill), odd eggs and baskets re-appropriated, rearranged desperately and/or ingeniously, to prevent self-explosion & alienation (artists, the Resident Dregs [KF], Scraps [either Scraps aka Laura Hill, her once mini keyboard act with videos of suburban blinds and other banalities OR, The Scraps, the underground un-civilisation in Demolition Man]) All eggs in one basket, all white, washed eggs in shiny, confidently woven but vulnerable baskets hate the most-of-eggs-in-a-few-homespun-or-weird-baskets (normies vs. hipsters?), or there's the wtf-is-that-even-eggs group (full-on eccentrics, happily detached, fanciful)...

So, who's the vulnerable one, why do aesthetics mean so much, life is weird. I got a few

different baskets, some token baskets, I dunno. Got a memory which I hope will stay sharp, already wondering how alcohol and age effects that (& my sense of continuity). So I've got weird memory recall, plus a bit of indeciveness, which makes you less censorious but, that might fade with age (as well as creativity). I am growing up; putting reins on relics resurfacing, carving a routine and system of judgment. But which ones and how, I dunno exactly. We don't get given a home. Maybe, a hollow sense of protection or 'self-esteem' when we 'belong to the workforce', a country, or some fitness club, rearrange our pasts a bit to align ourselves with something that has 'social currency'. Buys security and enjoyment. What does insecure even mean? Sometimes I'm an animal-like blockhead, uh, I've got food, a bedroom, bit of savings, so what. But I still believe in stuff deep down, like science, including some psychology, and there's all my sanity-creating beliefs about my physical, and thus emotional, security. There is my social background that has created a fundamental, taken-for-granted sense of being secure in my own skin.

So maybe I'll think I've got it all worked out in my little bubble but see the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs thing lists stuff like sex on the bottom, *Oh, oh no...* *What if I'm unhealthy?.. Oh no, I'm not 100 percent safe, yeah?* Food... *the right food?* *What am I missing out on?* Etc etc. plus there's material everywhere telling you you're inadequate somehow. That hierarchy is a little bit bullshit, I reckon, but

there's a bit in observing how we're immaturely stuck at the bottom, and then try to move up to stuff like 'friendship' and 'self-actualisation' and actually fuck over stuff on/near the bottom (food, air, water, social contact etc.), why? But anyway, as a group we're pretty infantile clambering up this triangle heirarchy thing. Disintegrated. Draw yourself right up the top there, "nyanyanya i'm the king of the castle". Or your little friendship circle holding hands just above bare basics tier. Or a hermit angel floating on nothing because you found yourself in spirituality, and don't even need to eat ("so I was meditating, and my cells just spoke to me, said I could live off air...") You *have* to have dreams, right? And you have to *kill* dreams, right? Dream wars... You can't not. Nobody's a civilian.

This is also very silly, in that nobody really understands what's going on in complex warzones, anyhow. If some kind, boring souls, could upset the whole idea of war and disunity, they would. Ah, but being simply universally nice or mean isn't enough. You smug little punk, you see how the harsh world works, where art has consequences. You're up against the baddies, the knowingly tribal, manipulative bullies. You see the good in people between the cracks of their pre-fabricated cultural image. No stuck-up flag bearer, when every aesthetic and style and history (maybe even especially yours/ours) is the surface image & gateway to *what that's convincingly different?* Real life I'm unemployed, a bit inarticulate, a

bit lame & this is just my art, my critical response. Wonder how you'd think I look and get up to most of the time, how I speak to lots of people. How I compartmentalise my image, deal with prejudices (my own & others) *emotionally* operate. I barely understand this shit, like if someone who's a kind person gave me something to wear that's opposite of the usual, or weird, I'd have probably passively put it on, up until recently when it seems more like they're saying "one of us, one of us". And also I'd try to sort-of-like any music. My facebook profile had embarrassing stuff from when I was sixteen. Now, I used to get it, 'self-expression'. As a kid. I guess I get it again, a bit. Have to *finish* stuff. Have a *bit* of dignity. Real stakes here, in images and words. I don't know how but it'll mean something, maybe something big if circumstances permit, maybe something nice & quietly affirming. Or disturbing, I dunno.

Few days later, came back to this. Ah, shit. Now I can write that I am thinking of some really limited personal interactions and trying to process them in a glossed-over, abstract, academic way. You know, there's a truism of 'the inside that counts' behind it, then there's the whole superficiality of this shit. And, the other cultural truism of, "you'll grow out of this shit and conform my boy", "omg mom drove us to the mall in a minivan soo lame mum, I used to be like but now mum's great and I write cute facebook post son mother's day". Perhaps buy a minivan and use it for band

stuff and your future litter of children, and your small business selling minimalist graphic art with inspirational quotes on them. Nah just kidding about the last, unless you think of some really good quotes. Fuck what is wrong with that, like 'in this household we love, forgive blah blah', better than a vintage Coca Cola sign found on the side of the road. Or is it? Hmmmmmm. Weeelllll anyhow, what have I learned from culture, inevitably tied to culture snobs who get so tied down in cliques that there becomes outsiders so espouse the intrinsic qualities of their 'culture' but in ways that must be directly observed across time. Maybe those unpretentious 'real' people are the distant and privileged ones, though, because they don't express a struggle so much. But then, they are socially disabled by their inability to express or realise their ideals in public. One gets the impression that they don't care about the public, or that they lack confidence. Lacking confidence is something easy for these insecure pretentious strugglers to judge, though it isn't really fair (depression, lack of resource etc.). Give em a chance, at least, by not writing them/myself off with a glance, though tread carefully because 'not writing off' can mean, a bit of a kick up the bum. Which, potentially reinforces your position as pretentious asshole. Anyhow, there's a bunch of people who convey exactly their attitudes, lifestyles and behaviors in their style/art/talent/whatever expression medium. Good and wise attitudes. But they get mistaken for pretentious

arseholes. By the unpretentious arseholes. Hm, who are just, more of arseholes in the privacy of disdain; in their lack of any, even token, lame rebellious gesture. Better have an excuse for not wearing the uniform (whatever that is). If you're say, a kindhearted religious person who is disgusted with cold businesssey cut-throat brutal competition then don't look like a religious person. No, fine, appear in public however allows you to function

'function',

Where, what how, like brush your teeth and stuff? Aw we know what 'function' means.

I'm a wuss, I don't want to rock the boat of nice, sincere people no matter how they look and if their job, social patterns etc. are theoretically bad. Long as everyone's happy & OK. Maybe *OK* is all we can aim for. But the real life affirming, straight-talking, self-respecting part of me is, "how can we let people insult the human spirit with cages?" Science, common sense – if you're not conscious of being compared as subordinate then you *feel less free*. Now in nature you're subordinate to the entire earth, scanning for predators, looking right at that grunting alpha male and knowing right what you have to do to beat him, if you could, feeling free and alive as can be having evaded big teeth. It's over, though. Now, what's the problem. Ah, there's no *reason* why you're less than others, just a bunch of invisible economies underpinned by some old barbarism. Like, for 'equality' I have to strive for some bland

aesthetic that isn't wrong because it's bland, generic, conformist, but because it's ultimately subordinate to a bunch of rich people everywhere. The normals don't choose it, they get cheap imitations and pat each other on the back for each other's self-esteem, mental health. Raid Versace, Chanel and all them in your fakes, why don't you, demand they be certified 'real'. "We want self-esteem! We want self-esteem! Mental health not magazines!" And all the knock off cheap brands, and their Chinese workers will join in, sick of shit quality for the masses, some kind of communist revolution street party photo spread across the newspapers where now everything's The Guardian, New York Times, Forbes, the Conversation, the Independent all the snootier stuff but with substance simply written, not fluff pieces... Anyhow, all these seemingly silly, maladjusted, histrionic women can bond with their children. They went out, cheap lipstick, knock-off brand dresses, and felt classy, somehow acted classy in asserting their self-interest, but amplified the high in it being *common* interest, and a victory. Common interest in the upper class, in being pretentious. Flattering obsession and a tragic threat, since the naturally classy won't get to earn this wholesome high. They can give up *everything* that distinguishes them, for no big thanks except from obsequious fools who wouldn't do it themselves in their position, no thanks except the quiet joy in their heart.

Perhaps, they will receive some

expression of gratitude for their necessary endurance of a period of adjustment, but the objective, pragmatic toughness asked of the lower classes will relay back to them. Adjustment to symbolic demotion may be acquired after a process of physical and psychological withdrawal. Learn what you *need* in the natural, egalitarian process of peer comparison and reassurance. This is, as far as possible, not a process of re-education or systemic brainwashing with yet more symbols, an alt culture. The veiled aggression and snootiness of that lends to ickiness and cynicism in the targets. It is vain, power is not vain. Perhaps a dose of the anaesthetising, or disturbing alt-products we've had to contend with so long in search for escape – an alternative, remotely-delivered social, cultural, intellectual education and/or validation – will be necessary as a stand-in. This is much in the same way a religious text is necessary when there are none who are confidently of the religion. When all *are* the religion, of the ideal social order, cultural products take on a mere social maintenance role. A ritual. Some religious sects – the passionate, fringe groups – construe ritual and even the term 'religion' as wrong. They do it – do the religion and ritual – (pentecostal groups, I am most familiar with, but the Sufi sect of Islam may apply) but something about the passion for all that is felt wrong seems to lend scorn heaped on the calm, hierarchical traditionalism and relative social contemporaneity of, say, Catholicism and Anglicanism, and perhaps the staid liberalism of Unitarian

Universalism and mainstream Buddhism. Ancient minority religions, I am not sure about, and I suppose they are maintained with a degree of privacy, whether out of oppression or privilege. The spirited, enervating, terrifying symbolic orders all summon a nervous feeling I could describe as hunger. I am empirically sated. Perhaps even psychologically sated with my rituals of pure banal life (all my domestic objects and habits constitute *culture*, after all, which isn't far from religion). I am functional, sane, calm, adjusted. 'Soul-bereft', 'pulse', 'spiritually dead', what does that mean? 'Maladjusted' is relatively easy to spot. To laugh at or snub, from a sheltered vantage point, or to fear or hate from a yet more constricted platform of ritualistic insularity that risks a maladjusted state itself.

Spiritually dead rituals sustained and established by fear-based emotions and/or the numbing cosiness of reproduction. A couch butt groove. Bookshelf bible, record collection, show poster, church air con. "Sit still kid". I'm rushing trying to finish this. Assignment deadline. Good. I have nothing against assignment deadlines, just yuck feeling reason applied to the social world in the same – ah, I could say 'ritualistic' way, as it ties with the rest – I dunno, I am pressing at something that feels right, that speaks to a semi-intuitive awareness that everything in my life that everyone before me made in response to their own fears (of lions, of other people, of the weather, of lack of intimacy, of intimacy, of any number of

things) and benevolent bravery is going to be exposed as brittle in I hope, an enlivening and conscience-awakening way. Not dull, ritualistic, academic-disciplined logic applied to the social world with a ritualistically-generated social conscience. Ah, that's what I was getting at, writing, "Spiritually dead rituals sustained and established by fear-based emotions or the numbing cosiness of reproduction..."

Semi-hopeless ode to common sense and decency (but you know you can just SKIP this!)

And I am basically getting at what should be *common sense*, that *social interaction* is at the bottom of all these signs and symbols and art and rituals... Social inter action. Beep. Beep. Beep. Durrr. Ah I am robot. Ah I sound like detached reproduction. Yanno. Man. Dude. Shalom. Namaste. In Jesus' name. Clap clap clap. Word salad. All your base are belong to us. Greetings. Howdy. Neighborino Earthling. Punk. Brother. Friend. Love (term of endearment). (edit uh, my unnameable demographic identity is shining through in this *randomness facade*) Hmm so many words to choose from (to make order & meaning of my social world?). Got a tool box (some theorist described culture as a tool box) of stuff to make art, music and writing with. Lots of stuff, words, connection tools that are weird or dead or unconvincing (except maybe 'love', I know some girls who it seems nice coming from, and I am a girl too) because connection to trust,

risk and heritage are lacking. Social interaction. Any kind of human connection. The mention of that seems grotesquely, numbly reproduced, learned from a guru or a slogan or a government health pamphlet. It unavoidably is, for the empty-ritual-acquainted, to some extent, depending on the proportion of soul-deadening training and effectiveness of defences against them. My defence against them, the silly banal world, which churns around and hurts people, the parts of me which is part of this never-ending process... I have to learn to feed this defence, start new processes. Not merely, *social interaction*. Not complacency, plain niceness, anxious desperation, obsessive-compulsive flaky loneliness and ritualistic appeasement... Good thirst and hunger. Not spiritual like religion or artistic genius or being 'the poet' or 'the writer' or a new fashion or a family or team. I dunno. Have to end this, get to some social interaction. I dunno. A good discipline, but not always. Yeah, of course. Bye 'public'/actually-a-small-readership, hello little social world.

Thanks, we're going somewhere!

